



CAPITOL CONNECTION

December 2016

Courtesy Tyler Kause

Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. As the governor's office works to become paperless, the newsletter will be available on-line and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe to this newsletter. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge for daily activities.

From the Governor: Hawai'i can lead by example

"Lucky we live Hawai'i" is more than just a catchphrase. As the holidays approach, Capitol Connection highlights some of the good work by the people of our state, the service of those who fought for our freedoms, and the progress we are making together for a better future.

Q. What accomplishments are you proudest of from the past year?

A. All the state departments have good news to report, but I would start with the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) team**. Their statewide town hall meetings and the Education Summit gathered feedback from more than 3,000 people who wanted to talk about transforming education. Our schools can be the best only if they're engaged with their communities. (See Page 3 for more on the ESSA Blueprint.)

We've also achieved the **highest ever bond ratings** for the state, which means we can deliver **more projects at lower cost**. In addition, we've made significant progress in key areas of **housing and homelessness, our Sustainable Hawai'i plan for energy self-sufficiency and protecting our oceans and watersheds, and fiscal accountability to manage taxpayer funds better**.

Q. What are some of your highest priorities for the coming year?

A. It will be about investing in our people — in education and jobs, housing, health and the environment — and continuing our work to make life in Hawai'i better. I believe we have to challenge the status quo to make things happen. Government needs to be about change because the world is changing, and we cannot operate as we have in the past.

Q. What personal significance does the Pearl Harbor 75th anniversary have for you and the first lady — especially since both your fathers served in WWII?

A. As we all know, the attack on Pearl Harbor changed Hawai'i and the world forever. Like others, our fathers decided it was important to prove their loyalty to America through their military service and defend our freedoms — even if it meant risking their lives.

Q. Now that the presidential election is over, do you worry about the divisiveness that emerged during the campaign? What do you think this means for Hawai'i?

A. This is Hawai'i's opportunity to lead by example. We celebrate diversity better than any other state because we encourage people to be proud of who they are and where they came from and to share that with others. With our Native Hawaiian gift of aloha, this is our chance to show how a multi-cultural community can work.



WASHINGTON PLACE WELCOME: Governor Ige and the first lady want to welcome the public to more Washington Place events. Kamaile Academy students were part of the recent Hawai'i Tourism Authority's 'Ahamele series.

Washington Place Open House Dec. 11

Gov. David Ige and first lady Dawn Amano-Ige, together with the Washington Place Foundation, will host a Christmas Open House on Dec. 11 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Multiple decorated trees will be on display. At 6:30 p.m. Ballet Hawaii will present costumes from its Royal Nutcracker show. Reservations are required by calling 586-0248 or visiting washingtonplacefoundation.org by Wednesday, Dec. 8.

Pearl Harbor 75th events to honor military service

For thousands of Hawai'i residents and other Americans, the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor holds special meaning. That includes Gov. David Ige and first lady Dawn Amamo-Ige, both of whose fathers fought in WWII to defend our freedoms.



Gov. Ige and first lady Dawn Amamo-Ige with WWII veteran Walter Hughes in Hilo.

"We welcome this opportunity to honor the members of the 'Greatest Generation,'" said the governor. "In the past 75 years, we have worked together to usher in the Pacific Era. With this commemoration, we can 'honor the past and inspire the future' to change the world for the better."

Governor and Mrs. Ige will join government officials, military personnel, celebrities, and grassroots citizens at several of the events Dec. 1-11, honoring those who lost their lives on Dec. 7, 1941 in the attack on Pearl Harbor and those who fought in the ensuing years of WWII. The events, many of which are open to the public, range from musical performances to ceremonies and other events honoring Pearl Harbor survivors and all veterans, active duty military and their families.

"This will be a special time for Hawai'i," said retired Navy Adm. Thomas Fargo, chair of the state commemoration committee. "We encourage all to participate in the events designed to bring us together."

At the Family Assessment Center: Forging a new life

She's a Coast Guard veteran, a single mom with three kids — and she's homeless. But as the holiday season approaches, Crystal L. says she has hope for the future, thanks to the help she's received from the state's new Family Assessment Center (FAC) in Kaka'ako and her own determination.

The FAC, which opened in September and is managed by Catholic Charities Hawai'i staff, is a one-stop assessment center and short-term shelter for homeless families. Its goal is to move families into permanent housing more quickly using a "Housing First" approach. In fact, the first family who came to the center was housed in 21 days and more families are transitioning to immediate housing.

Crystal says she turned to the FAC to escape an abusive relationship, with plans to make a new life. But she soon found out she couldn't make ends meet with her savings and her Veterans Administration (VA) benefits. She also deals with PTSD and says of her family, "We had a stable life once. I'm trying to get back to what that feels like."

Adrian Contreras, FAC's program director, credits Crystal's motivation for working with the center's staff to get medical coverage and official documents, enroll her two oldest children in school and work with the VA to find housing. However, Crystal says it was the FAC's hands-on, step-by-step approach in helping families navigate bureaucracies that has made all the difference.

"This program is smaller and close knit, rather than being in a shelter with 300 people," says Crystal. "We feel safer here, and the staff helps us get the information we need." Contreras says the goal is to make sure each family is in a good position to make it on their own once they leave the FAC. "We make a heavy investment in time and attention up front to help with multiple needs and connect them to services. Hopefully, we've set things in motion for them to succeed."

Schofield soldier is nation's best

Explosive ordnance disposal specialist Sgt. Robert Miller is used to being in tense situations. But he said his drive to challenge himself is what led to his being chosen the Army's 2016 Soldier of the Year.



"I honestly just wanted to see how far I could take it," he explained. Miller, assigned to Schofield and representing the U.S. Army Pacific, beat out soldiers from 10 commands across the nation. To win the honor, Miller endured four days of grueling competition, including urban warfare simulations and a 12-mile march.

Miller said Hawai'i is his first real duty station. "This place has been so good to me. It really has started to feel like home."



Keoni Bowthorpe and his family with Gov. David Ige.

Bowthorpe awarded Carnegie medal for heroism

Haleiwa resident Keoni Bowthorpe was presented with the prestigious Carnegie Medal by Gov. Ige last month for risking his life fighting off an 11-foot tiger shark to save a fellow surfer.

Bowthorpe is one of 25 medal recipients recognized in the United States and Canada for extraordinary civilian heroism by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. He is credited with taking severely injured Colin Cook on his back while paddling to shore on his board.



Crystal and her daughter at the Family Assessment Center.

ESSA's blueprint: A chance to transform our schools

Suppose the governor's office asked you to be part of a team to help transform public education in Hawai'i. There would be no pay, you'd have to go to dozens of meetings and give up a large chunk of your free time to talk to people across the state about improving our schools. Would you do it?

Last June, 20 people from major stakeholder groups said yes, and they've been meeting ever since to produce a "blueprint" vision for what Hawai'i schools could be. This team includes current Department of Education (DOE) officials, students, teachers, principals, parents, legislators and community members.

At a recent Saturday work session, team members gathered at Aiea High School to fine-tune the latest draft of the blueprint that will go to the Board of Education (BOE) for discussion this month. The draft is based on feedback from hundreds of people who came to 20 town hall meetings on six islands and an Education Summit in July that drew more than a thousand people.

"We've been amazed at the response from the community. It's been so inspiring," said team chair and award-winning retired principal Darrel Galera. "This is grassroots democracy — a blueprint by the people, for the people. It's an affirmation of who we are and what we believe in for our children."

Why was the team needed? "The new federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), gave the states more control over their own school systems. The team is focusing on more school empowerment rather than a 'one size fits all' approach," he explained. "We needed a group willing to dedicate itself to a community-wide conversation about how to prepare students for the 21st century."

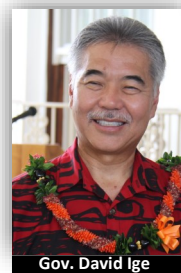
Galera praised the commitment of the team as well as the governor for seizing the opportunity to launch the ESSA efforts. "It's a big deal, and it required a lot of courage. The governor's leadership and vision is what made the difference," he said. Over the next few months, the focus will be on aligning the DOE strategic plan and the Hawaii State ESSA Plan. "The goal is for alignment of the educational plans to make the blueprint vision a reality," Galera explained.

Armed with feedback from the community meetings, the ESSA team has crafted a blueprint about future-focused goals and "design ideas" to move from vision to action. It focuses on three priorities that set the bar high for public education:

- All students empowered and prepared to be innovators and global citizens;
- All educators successfully empowered to teach, lead, motivate, empathize and innovate to achieve equity and excellence;
- A statewide system driven by innovation, transparency, empowered leadership, and Hawai'i's unique values and beliefs.

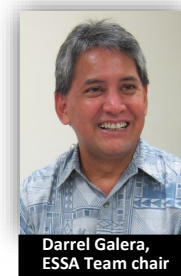
So what will it take for Hawai'i to develop the best public education system in the nation? "I think it comes down to two things: visionary leadership and teacher support," said Galera. "If teachers and leaders aren't supported and empowered, then it will be an average system. That means trusting educators as professionals. You cannot get to excellence if you don't have a culture that's positive, visionary, supportive, empowering and risk-taking."

Galera said the ESSA blueprint should be considered a dynamic work in progress. "These are guiding documents to help provide direction, but what's essential is that we continue to stay engaged as a community. We cannot say that every 15 years we'll get engaged or every 10 years we'll be empowered. Education is important. Empowerment requires being open, listening and collaborating as a community."



Gov. David Ige

"Our public school system touches us all. How do we create a system that prepares graduates for their futures — not our past? My vision is future-focused, empowered school communities that inspire innovation, creativity and leadership."



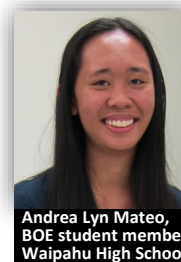
Darrel Galera,
ESSA Team chair

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Catherine Caine, 2015
Teacher of the Year,
Waikiki Elementary

"The governor is the real deal. He believes in better schools as an integral part of the state's success. To have a society that works, we have to equitably educate every person, not just the ones living in the best districts."



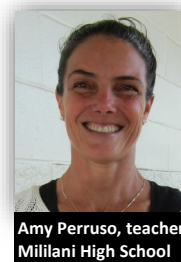
Andrea Lyn Mateo,
BOE student member,
Waipahu High School

"Students think the ESSA process is good because we have a student voice on the team. It's also key to have a strong principal who sets the tone for the school and is willing to try new things."



Steve Terstegge,
parent & SCC chair,
Castle High School

"Minor tweaks of the status quo will not help us meet the needs of our children's future. It's not all about being a good test taker and contributing to a school's ratings. For meaningful and lasting change, you have to change the culture."



Amy Perruso, teacher,
Mililani High School

"This ESSA process has challenged some of the cynicism around policy-making. The fact that we're having these statewide, open discussions on education — that has never happened before."

State's 2016 Code Challenge shows Hawai'i's got talent

They may look young — heck, they are young — but don't let that fool you. The winners of the recent Hawai'i Annual Code Challenge (HACC) performed like pros as they developed computer applications to improve state government services.

The competition, initiated by Governor Ige and coordinated by the state's Office of Enterprise Technology, drew 27 teams of more than 200 coders who tackled solutions ranging from helping with referrals for homeless families to scheduling jail visitations and information for college-bound students. The biggest winner, though, will be the state of Hawai'i as it taps the talents of the local tech community — a priority of the Ige administration — to show that homegrown coders can help solve government problems in cost-effective ways.



The winning teams from the Hawai'i Code Challenge to improve government services.

"You should have seen the energy in the room," said the governor, who served as one of the HACC judges. "A lot of them were students — some of whom had never entered a competition like this in their lives." The winners included teams from Kamehameha Schools and Honolulu Community College (HCC) as well as coders from the professional tech community.

First place team member Christine Joy Rioca said she was grateful for the opportunity to apply the skills she learned in HCC's Computing, Electronics and Networking Technology (CENT) program. "I see myself as a future network administrator for the state of Hawai'i or a local tech company. Tech IS the future," she said.

New life for governor's garden

The Washington Place garden has been transformed into a model of sustainability and hands-on education, thanks to an initiative by first lady Dawn Amano-Ige and the "grow local" enthusiasm of many. The result is eight new, organically managed vegetable beds bursting with kale, kalo, eggplant, beets, carrots and tomatoes and an aquaponics system for efficient use of water.

The Washington Place garden partnership includes the state Department of Agriculture and the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) with 6th grade students from St. Andrew's Priory coming every Wednesday to tend to the vegetables. "We even have seeds from the White House garden," Mrs. Ige said.



First lady Dawn Amano-Ige in the garden with St. Andrew's Priory students.

Ted Radovich, an associate specialist in CTAHR's Department of Tropical Plant and Soil Science, coordinated the project with Washington Place director Cameron Heen and the help of many others in the community. Among them were Ilima Ho-Lastimoso and her husband, Bob, of the Waimanalo Learning Center, who built and installed the vegetable beds, and Hawaiian Earth Products, who provided the locally composted soil. St. Andrew's teacher Daniel McInerney said, "Being able to touch the roots of a garden is an integral part of learning about local food production."

DHS names Team of the Year



Team of the Year members from the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority were honored at a ceremony recently for their work in renovating public housing units in record time.

A pilot program that trains a multi-skilled team to renovate public housing units in record time has won the Department of Human Services Team of the Year award. Before this Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) team was assembled, it took 200 days to turn around public housing units. Now it takes only seven days. "It translates to more housing quicker for our most vulnerable," said HPHA director Hakkim Quansafi.

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